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Chairperson: Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE
(Vice-Chairperson)

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Ms. García-Prince, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Combined initial and second periodic reports of Paraguay (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2 and Add.1 and 2)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Muñoz (Paraguay) took a place at the Committee table.

2. Ms. MUÑOZ (Paraguay) said that her oral presentation would correct and expand on the initial report submitted in 1992. Since that time, important political and legal changes had taken place in Paraguay, including the adoption of a new Constitution and of major national and international legal instruments concerning women's rights. Those developments were described in the addenda to the report. Considerable changes were taking place in the country: after decades of authoritarian rule, a civilian Government had come to power in 1992, which had introduced a number of changes in the structure of the State, including decentralization, as well as measures to promote equality between men and women. The Government was seeking to move forward towards sustainable development and to strengthen the democratic process. The new Constitution stated that the country's system of government was a representative, participatory and pluralistic democracy, founded on the recognition of human dignity. It also stated that men and women had equal civil, political, social and cultural rights. Furthermore, it contained important provisions on family planning, women's political participation, equality in labour relations, the advancement of rural women and their sharing in the benefits of development, as well as affirmative action and measures for the eradication of violence against women.

3. Paraguay had ratified a number of international human rights instruments, including those directly concerned with women's human rights. It had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1986. Since then, women's organizations in the country had campaigned actively for the adoption of policies and legislation that accorded with the principles contained in the Convention. Implementation of the Convention, despite a number of achievements, had none the less encountered various obstacles which remained to be overcome. Equality had been achieved in a number of spheres, but there was still a considerable disparity between men's and women's participation in decision-making.

4. Paraguay had no legal or administrative provisions that expressly discriminated against women in the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Constitution required the State to adopt practical measures to overcome discrimination. It stated that all residents of the Republic were equal in dignity and rights, and that the State must remove obstacles to equality and prevent factors that promoted discrimination.

5. In theory sexual discrimination no longer existed; in practice, however, much remained to be done. One of the major obstacles to the equal enjoyment of their rights was the fact that women were not sufficiently well-informed about their rights and about the exercise of citizenship. The Constitution provided for the creation of mechanisms to overcome such obstacles. One such mechanism was the Secretariat for Women, established in 1992, whose task it was to encourage the incorporation of a gender perspective into public policy. Important measures had also been adopted at the municipal level, including the introduction of a quota system for women's participation in community boards and local councils and the creation of offices for women's affairs. The State had also set up a National Council for Reproductive Health and Family Planning.

6. In order to overcome social and cultural attitudes that tended to entrench inequalities, the Secretariat for Women, municipal bodies and non-governmental organizations had concentrated all their efforts on a public awareness campaign and were in permanent contact with radio, television and the press. Under the National Plan for the Prevention and Punishment of Violence against Women, the authorities were promoting a number of educational activities, as well as measures for the prevention and punishment of acts of violence against women. The Government had also launched a National Programme for Equality of Opportunities and Results for Women in Education (PRIOME), and had set up a Network for the Education of Young People and Adults of Both Sexes, which, among other things, promoted female literacy.

7. It was clear that discriminatory cultural and social attitudes persisted which would take a long time to overcome. Efforts were being concentrated on laying the legal and institutional bases for the development of programmes of formal and informal education which would eliminate the stereotypes and prejudices that encouraged discrimination and violence against women.

8. With the adoption of Law 104 of 1990 amending the Penal Code, prostitution of others and traffic in women had been criminalized. Those amendments had been prompted by the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. It was recognized that prostitutes were exposed to health risks and the possibility of violence. In particular, considerable efforts were being made to defend the rights of girl children in the world of prostitution. There was also a national AIDS campaign which sought to safeguard the health of prostitutes.

9. Although women's political participation was one of the more visible changes which had taken place in the past five years, marked disparities still existed. Statistics published in 1995 by the United Nations Development Programme showed that women still occupied no more than 7 per cent of ministerial posts and Parliamentary seats and 10 per cent of posts in local government. At present, the only woman minister was the Minister in charge of the Office of the Secretariat for Women, and she took part in meetings of the Council of Ministers only when invited to do so by the President of the Republic. A proposal was currently before Parliament to amend the Electoral Code and to introduce electoral quotas for women.

10. The Constitution gave women equal status in respect of nationality and citizenship. No marriage contracted in Paraguay could affect a woman's nationality.

11. An increasing percentage of the total Government budget was being spent on education, and measures were being taken to include a gender perspective in education. While there was no gender-based discrimination in admission to formal education in Paraguay, the drop-out rate for girls had until recently been very high. However, census data published in 1994 had shown a marked improvement in the educational level of children aged seven and above, both nation-wide and in rural areas. An Educational Reform Council had been set up but had been slow to recognize the specific problems of women. PRIOME had become an effective tool for overcoming such problems. The drop-out problem was acute, especially in rural areas and was closely linked to poverty. It was hoped that, as poverty diminished, children would have a better chance of attending primary and secondary school and moving on to higher education.

12. The Constitution dealt specifically with female labour, stating that no discrimination among workers on grounds of ethnic origin, sex, age, religion, social status or political or union preference was permitted. In 1993, the National Congress had adopted a new Labour Code which contained important innovations regarding domestic service, sexual harassment in the work place and other aspects related to the human rights of working women. According to the 1992 census, the percentage of women in the economically active population was only 22.1. That figure did not, of course, take into account women's informal work and work in the home.

13. Regarding access to vocational training, the Ministry of Justice and Labour administered a National Vocational Training Service, through which the Secretariat for Women promoted the vocational training of women. There was no restriction on women's right to paid leave, compensation for dismissal or bonuses. Those requirements, as well as the obligation to provide social security coverage, also applied to employment in domestic service. The Constitution contained explicit provisions on maternity leave and the future possibility of paternity leave. The Labour Code provided for the health and safety of pregnant women and nursing mothers; under the Constitution, women employees could not be dismissed during pregnancy or maternity leave. The Labour Code also called for the establishment of day-care centres in enterprises.

14. The General Directorate of Family Welfare and the General Directorate of Social Welfare had responsibilities which included the promotion of health services for women and families. The National Council for Reproductive Health and Family Planning was responsible for proposing, monitoring and executing reproductive health and family planning programmes.

15. There was no legislative restriction on women or inequality between men and women in carrying on commercial activities or obtaining loans or mortgages. Married women were subject to the same restrictions and had the same rights in that regard. Women were not subject to any restrictions on their leisure, sports or other cultural activities. A number of clubs had changed their statutes in order to accept women members.

16. There were more than 980,000 rural women in Paraguay, and it was clear that they had less access to education and health than men and urban women. There were nearly 25,000 indigenous women in rural areas. Since Paraguay was a multicultural country, the term "rural women" included peasant women and indigenous women, and both were explicit beneficiaries of agrarian legislation. Development plans, although not explicitly discriminatory, reflected the existing social order; they lacked a gender perspective, with the result that planners had not paid sufficient attention to women's problems. The Government had begun implementing a number of programmes for rural women.

17. Among the legal advances achieved in recent years, the most important was the establishment of women's equality before the law. The Constitution explicitly recognized that men and women were equal in civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. There was full equality between men and women in the enjoyment and exercise of civil rights, and men and women had the same legal capacity both as single people and in marriage or de facto partnership. They had equal capacity to administer the marital property and to enter into contracts; they also had equal rights if the marriage ended and the marital property was divided. The Civil Code prohibited the execution of contracts with third parties without the knowledge and authorized signature of both spouses, in order to safeguard communal property. Consequently, any private act or instrument executed by the husband without the wife's consent was null and void.

18. Husband and wife exercised the same rights over their children, and children born in and out of wedlock had the same rights. The Constitution stated that men and women had the same right freely and responsibly to decide on the number and spacing of their children and to receive family planning information and services. Married men and women had the same rights and duties. A married woman was free to decide whether or not to use her husband's surname, and a husband could add his wife's surname to his own, if he wanted. Children born in wedlock bore the surname of each parent, the order of names being decided by agreement between the parents. Lastly, husband and wife exercised the same rights of parental authority over their children.

19. The CHAIRPERSON thanked Ms. Muñoz for her presentation and for the considerable effort that had gone into its preparation. Given the fact that Paraguay was in a period of transition to democracy, it was surprising that its first report adhered so closely to the Committee's guidelines. She praised the report's frankness, the care taken in its preparation and its clear recognition that there was a gap between law and reality and that much remained to be done. It was clear that not only the Government, but also civil society, were firmly committed to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the country's well-developed women's networks, particularly the network of women town councillors, showed that Paraguayan women were committed to improving their own status.

Article 2

20. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that the transition from dictatorship to democracy provided Paraguay with an opportunity to make women a part of the democratic process, rather than repeat the errors of the transition to democracy

in Europe. Paraguay would also be able to benefit from the gains of the women's movement over the past 20 years.

21. She asked whether the fact that, as addendum 1 to the report stated, the Secretariat for Women had been established as an organ of the Office of the President of the Republic meant that the duties of the Minister in charge of the Secretariat differed from those of other government ministers, and whether the Secretariat had its own staff and budget or whether its primary function was coordination with other ministries. Similarly, she wondered whether the Network of Town Councillors had legal status or had been established informally by women's groups and municipal leaders. She felt that it was important that there should be a legal basis for the Network, and offered to assist in establishing contact between women municipal officials in Paraguay and those in Germany, where such institutionalization had borne considerable fruit.

Article 4

22. Ms. MÄKINEN welcomed the introduction of a quota system for political bodies, a practice which had recently been established in Finland with encouraging results. She wondered whether Paraguay's national machinery had developed a plan to increase the political participation of rural women more effectively and how the Government proposed to combat violence against women, which appeared to be a major problem in Paraguay. She noted that there had been changes in the Labour Code which would affect the status of women in the labour market, but wondered whether any temporary measures had been taken to improve the situation of women working in the informal sector.

23. Ms. AYKOR noted that the Secretariat for Women had been established as the national machinery for initiating policies and affirmative action on behalf of women. She wondered, however, which institution was responsible for implementing those policies, and whether the Secretariat was primarily a coordinating body responsible for initiating and overseeing the policies of other institutions. She asked how large the Secretariat's budget was, how large a staff it had and whether its resources were sufficient, especially for dealing with health issues and the transition to democracy. She wondered whether the Secretariat was able to compile gender-disaggregated statistical data; the report stated that insufficient data were available, but addendum 2 provided extensive statistics.

Articles 5 and 6

24. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA DEL REAL praised Paraguay's National Programme for Equality of Opportunity and Results for Women in Education but wondered whether it was Government-sponsored, whether it had the support of Parliament and whether it had been reflected in the legal system. Such programmes required a legal basis. While parliamentary support did not guarantee implementation, it was an important step. She hoped that the Committee would receive further information on the success of the Programme in Paraguay's next periodic report.

25. She asked whether article 5 of the Convention was being publicized in order to convey the importance of eliminating stereotypes and changing behaviour

patterns. In her own country, Spain, the provisions of article 5 were not sufficiently well known.

26. According to paragraph 48 of the report, a proposal for a minimum 20 per cent quota for female representation in executive and elective posts had been appealed on constitutional grounds. However, since addendum 1 stated that several political parties had introduced a minimum quota for women in lists of candidates for elective office, she assumed that the appeal had been unsuccessful.

27. While it was encouraging that the Government had instituted a National Plan for the Prevention and Punishment of Violence against Women, a number of laws still needed to be amended. For example, the rape of a married woman was punished more seriously than that of a prostitute or a woman who was not a virgin, and penalties varied according to the age of the victim. Domestic violence as such did not seem to be identified or punished under the Penal Code, and abduction, like rape, carried different penalties according to the age and marital status of the victim. An attack on a married woman was punished more harshly, because the offence was regarded as an insult to the husband rather than to the wife. She requested more information on that issue, so that the Committee might formulate a recommendation on it.

28. More information was also needed on sexual harassment, which was not covered by the legal systems of many countries, and on exploitation of the prostitution of others. It was not clear whether pimps were punished more severely if they benefited from the prostitution of minors, or whether the clients of prostitutes were punished at all. Further information was also required on the rehabilitation centres for prostitutes. In order to determine whether existing laws were adequate and whether they were being applied, it would be useful to receive data on the number and type of judgements handed down in cases of violence against women, procurement and traffic in women; even laws which were good in themselves were ineffective if there was no will to enforce them or if they could not be enforced.

29. Ms. KHAN said that the approach taken towards prostitution seemed arbitrary. It appeared that some 26,000 Paraguayan children, many of them under 12 years of age, were working in cities as street vendors or prostitutes. The report presented by Paraguay at the Beijing Conference had made it clear that violence against women, including very young women, was a serious problem in that country. Measures to re-educate the public had included radio programmes devoted to the study of gender perspectives, but it appeared that no effective mechanism had been developed and the Penal Code continued to distinguish among different categories of violence against women. She wondered whether any measures had been taken to inform the public of the provisions of articles 5 and 6 of the Convention and, if so, whether those measures had produced results. She also wondered whether any use had been made of television, which had a wider influence than radio, in re-educating the public.

30. Ms. GURDULICH DE CORREA, speaking on article 6, asked what the Government was doing to help rural women, who mostly spoke only Guaraní and were often illiterate, and what changes had been made in the Penal Code with a view to implementing the new Constitution. She agreed that the Committee needed more

information on violence against women in order to formulate a recommendation; in particular, she would like to know what penalties were imposed for the rape of children. Lastly, the Committee had learnt that there had been an increase in the traffic in women and girls, who were being taken to other countries; it would like further information on the matter.

31. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO said that, as a woman in a position of power, Ms. Muñoz provided women in her country with both a role model and a reason for hope. Speaking on article 6, she noted that, since paragraph 70 of the report stated that there was no specific legislation dealing with prostitution, she assumed that there was no specific declaration in Paraguayan law that prostitution per se was a crime. However, the report also stated that police were authorized to conduct raids, and it was her understanding that prostitution, like homosexuality and transvestism, was considered an offence against public decency. She wondered whether police corruption contributed to the problem. Since many urban prostitutes were extremely young, she wondered how Paraguay was protecting its human resources for the future. She would like to know how many pimps were currently in jail and what measures existed for the rehabilitation of minors who engaged in prostitution. She also wished to know how the Government was meeting its commitment under the Convention to eliminate from the Penal Code subjective terms such as "immoral" and "improper" or, failing that, who was responsible for determining what constituted immoral or improper behaviour. It was not clear how minors who engaged in prostitution were being punished; there was no reference to the punishment of adult prostitutes, but the Penal Code stipulated that under-age girls could be placed under the responsibility of the juvenile courts and even institutionalized. She wondered whether such girls were really being rehabilitated and equipped for re-entry into society.

Article 7

32. Ms. GURDULICH DE CORREA said that her country, Argentina, had always supported efforts by Paraguay's leaders to amend the Electoral Code. The introduction of a minimum quota for women's participation in the legislature would bring about qualitative as well as quantitative changes, and the women thus elected would be able to secure not only de jure but also de facto improvements in the status of women, including women in rural areas, who were the most disadvantaged.

33. Ms. CORTI wished to know how the Minister in charge of the Secretariat for Women and other women politicians in Paraguay were ensuring that the gender perspective was taken into account by political parties, and how the Minister was coping in a male-dominated Government. She would also appreciate information on Paraguay's electoral system, the treatment of women under that system and whether any political parties had specific projects to promote universal and compulsory education. As long as there was bilingualism in Paraguay and the mass of the rural population spoke only Guaraní, there would always be two classes and no social progress would be possible, especially for women. Women were underrepresented in trade unions, which played a crucial role. If women were not active in trade unions, there would always be segregation in the workforce, especially in times of crisis when men would tend to defend the cause of male workers.

34. She asked whether, under Paraguayan law, rape was considered an offence against morality or an attack on the human person.

35. Ms. KHAN, referring to the electoral quotas mentioned by the representative of Paraguay, asked what percentages had been set for women. In view of the important historical role played by peasant women in the political process, she wished to know whether any specific quotas had been set aside for peasant women by the three political parties that had quotas for women, and whether women's organizations had taken advantage of the Convention in that regard.

36. The CHAIRPERSON said that non-governmental organizations had expressed concern at the fact that the Minister in charge of the Secretariat for Women did not have the same rank as other ministers and did not have a say in national policy discussions unless they dealt exclusively with women's issues. The Committee should recommend that the Secretariat for Women be given the same political authority as other government ministries, since its special status was a hidden form of discrimination.

Article 10

37. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO, referring to the statement that there was no discrimination between men and women in the area of education, asked why 6 in 10 illiterate people in Paraguay were women, what the Government was doing to deal with the problem of illiteracy especially since 60 per cent of the population spoke only Guaraní, what kind of educational development programme it was preparing in order to provide access to education for the hundreds of thousands of illiterate women in Paraguay and, specifically, whether there was a declared policy of including rural women in mass education programmes. The representative of Paraguay should indicate whether any specific plans had been implemented to give older women access to education and whether, given the fact that 70 per cent of the rural population lived in extreme poverty, the Government had taken steps to provide alternative training for rural people so that they participate more fully in development.

38. Ms. OUEDRAOGO said that, although substantial progress had been made in eliminating discrimination in education, there was a contradiction between the statement that there was no discrimination in education and the fact that the massive migration of rural women to urban areas was caused by inequalities in education. Rural women did not get the training they needed to compete for jobs in their places of origin. She would appreciate more information on that issue and on the age of rural women who migrated. She would also like to receive information on the school drop-out rate and on any programmes that the Government intended to implement in order to remedy that situation, which affected girls more than boys.

39. Ms. ABAKA said that information should have been provided on the availability of any educational programmes on health and family well-being and on the extent to which such programmes were geared towards women. The availability of family planning information and advice and women's access to it should have been described, as should any practical and legal measures taken to eliminate the remaining vestiges of discrimination in education.

Article 11

40. Ms. MÄKINEN, noting the enormous pay disparity between men and women, asked whether there was a minimum wage in Paraguay, especially for domestic employees, and whether the Government had any plans to improve the working conditions of domestic employees.

Article 12

41. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO, noting the alarmingly high abortion rate, asked whether the Government was developing any programmes to reduce the incidence of abortion and whether any policy statement existed in that regard. She wished to know whether the health of pregnant teenagers was monitored, whether the Government offered them any specific assistance and what happened to their babies. Since Paraguay had very high maternal and infant mortality rates, she wished to know whether there were any specific programmes to reduce the infant mortality rate, why mothers were dying in such large numbers and what action was being taken to remedy the situation. Any information on specific plans and programmes to control sexually transmitted diseases among adolescent girl prostitutes would also be appreciated.

42. Ms. CORTI asked whether any policies were being implemented to prevent the spread of AIDS, and whether women were being adequately informed about the dangers of that disease and how to protect themselves against it. Concerning abortion, the Committee would appreciate receiving any available statistics on illegal abortions and the abortion methods used. Referring to the statement that it was customary for women to consult their husbands before availing themselves of family planning services, she asked what action the Government was taking to educate women and liberate them from their psychological dependence on men. In view of the high fertility rate among the Guaraní, she wondered how the Government would go about introducing family planning among that segment of the country's population.

43. Ms. SHALEV said that the higher rates of infant mortality among girls between the ages of one and four years might be due to what the Beijing Platform for Action termed gender gaps in nutrition or simply discrimination in the allocation of food among girls and boys. Concerning the extremely high levels of maternal mortality, there was abundant evidence that many of those deaths were caused by unsafe abortions, due to the fact that abortion was illegal in Paraguay. It was very important to assess the health impact of the law on abortion and to take into account the Beijing Platform for Action, which called on States to review laws containing punitive measures against women who underwent abortions. There appeared to be a conflict between the law on abortion and the Constitution, which recognized the right to decide freely on the number and spacing of children. The law appeared to place women's right to life in severe jeopardy. The World Health Organization might be able to assist Paraguay in studying the dimensions and causes of maternal mortality. She would also appreciate information on the number of prosecutions for illegal abortion. Noting that Paraguay's laws were more lenient with regard to infanticide committed to protect the honour of women, she asked for comparative information on the laws concerning abortion and infanticide, the corresponding penalties, and the number of prosecutions under the law on infanticide.

44. Concerning sexual health, she asked whether there were any plans to amend the law which made a child's statement in a case of alleged sexual abuse inadmissible in legal proceedings, as that indirectly affected the child's right to sexual health.

45. Ms. KHAN said that family planning and access to birth control seemed to be the key health issues in Paraguay, especially in rural areas. She asked whether anything was being done to develop statistics on abortion. It appeared from an NGO report submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Women that because abortion was illegal and birth control was inadequate, Paraguayan women frequently sought illegal abortions. She asked what happened to the unwanted babies that were born, whether children born out of wedlock had the same rights as other children, and whether such children received any kind of support from the father. What was being done by the Ministry of Health to address the situation, were women's groups lobbying church leaders to try to amend abortion laws, and was the Secretariat for Women taking any action? Since about half the doctors in Paraguay were women, it should be possible to address the situation if the Government developed strategies based on the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action.

46. Ms. ABAKA said that in General Recommendation No. 15 on the avoidance of discrimination against women in national strategies for the prevention and control of AIDS, it was recommended that States parties should include in their reports information on the effects of AIDS on the situation of women and information on the action taken to cater to the needs of women who were infected and to prevent specific discrimination against women in response to AIDS; that information was lacking in the report and should be provided.

47. There was no information in the report about Paraguay's population policy. It was regrettable that, as indicated in paragraph 308, the issue of abortion was not even discussed at the public level. It appeared from the NGO report on Paraguay submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Women that Paraguayan women were continuing to seek illegal abortions when they did not meet the criteria for abortion on medical grounds. She asked whether any penalties were imposed for illegal abortion and whether there had been any court cases. She would also welcome information on the number of teenage pregnancies, the age of teenage mothers, and what happened to them after they gave birth.

48. The family planning methods referred to in paragraph 310 were all for women, with the exception of the traditional withdrawal methods. She asked whether that meant that men were not involved in the way that women were as beneficiaries of family planning programmes. She also sought information on the health needs of migrant women in Paraguay, and on drug abuse and related problems among women and programmes to combat drug addition.

Article 14

49. Ms. OUEDRAOGO requested information on efforts by rural women to organize themselves. The report highlighted the persistence of stereotypes and problems of social discrimination and injustice, but there was no indication of the impact of action carried out by women themselves. If women were not organized at the grass-roots level, it would be impossible to achieve the desired results.

50. Paragraph 337 referred to the lack of obstetrical care but did not indicate how that was reflected in maternal and child health. Information was needed on the rate of maternal mortality resulting from lack of preventive care. Sex education for girls was important, particularly in view of the high illiteracy and school drop-out rates for girls, which contributed to the number of illegal abortions. She asked what educational programmes were being developed for girls in rural areas.

51. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE said that the Committee needed information on the efforts of peasant groups to gain ownership of land, which, according to the NGO report or Paraguay, were being blocked by the Government. There seemed to be strong opposition to agricultural reform and high levels of violence in the countryside, affecting entire families.

52. The Committee also needed information about the situation of indigenous women, since both the report and the addenda included indigenous women among rural women in general and that could conceal information on the double discrimination often encountered by indigenous rural women.

53. Women needed to be fully represented in government. The gender approach must be global rather than sectoral; gender perspectives must be incorporated in the mainstream of development and in the economic and social decisions taken by the Government. The Secretariat for Women could not be excluded from economic and social decision-making.

Article 15

54. Ms. GURDULICH DE CORREA asked for information on the situation with regard to legal equality between men and women in Paraguay and on whether women and men had equal opportunities to join the armed forces.

Article 16

55. Ms. CARTWRIGHT said that she had been pleased to hear that the Paraguayan Government had been focusing on the question of women's right to own and administer land. It appeared from the report that there were a significant number of female-headed households in Paraguay, and women needed to be able to own and administer property, including land, in order to feed and shelter their families. Moreover, women must be protected in any land reform that was carried out.

56. Referring to General Recommendation No. 21 and the rights of women in respect of inheritance and marital property, she asked whether women had the same rights as men to inherit land and other assets, whether they had means of redress through the courts, and whether the courts recognized the principle of equality and the right of women to inherit land and assets. Were women entitled to an equal division of property following the breakdown of marriage and did the courts enforce the law fairly?

57. She asked whether there were any educational programmes for judges, police, lawyers, court administrators and prison officials on the importance of gender issues as they affected the administration of justice. She also sought

information on the level of representation of women in all areas of the administration of justice.

58. From information provided by NGOs concerning the basic right not to be held in prison without an arrest warrant or conviction, she said that it appeared that that right was being violated in Paraguay; there were also reports of ill-treatment of women in prison or custody, in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. She asked whether the Government of Paraguay was taking steps to deal with that situation.

59. Ms. AYKOR said that paragraph 361 indicated that over 11 per cent of farmers were women heads of household, and yet, according to the addendum (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1), both spouses had the same rights when a marriage broke up. In the oral report, it had been indicated that cohabiting couples had the same rights. She asked what was meant by "shared living" and whether that meant that female heads of families had the same responsibilities as men when shared living arrangements were dissolved.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.